

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4571

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4571

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FPRO, MASS, EFIS, PLOS, ENRG

SUBJ: MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR CARDENAS

1. SUMMARY: CARDENAS CALLED ON ME JUNE 25 TO DISCUSS STATE OF US-GOE RELATIONS. HE COVERED THE FIELD. CLEARLY UPSET ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS ON THE LST TRNASFER, HE SAID THE DELAY WAS ESPECIALLY BITTER NEWS FOR HIS FONMIN AND PRESIDENT. CARDENAS LAMENTED THAT VARIOUS NEGATIVE ELEMENTS IN US-ECUADOREAN BILATERAL RELATIONS SHOULD EXIST AT JUST THE TIME WHEN GOE IS PLANNING A MORE CONCILIATORY OIL POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR CARDENAS, HERE IN QUITO ON CONSULTATION, CALLED ON ME FOR 45 MINUTES AFTERNOON JUNE 25. HE DID MOST OF THE TALKING. AFTER REMARKING THAT WE TWO AMBASSADORS WERE LEFT WITH "THE AFTERMATH" OF THE FISHING BOAT SEIZURES, HE TURNED TO SPECIFIC POINTS OF FRICTION.

3. HE FIRST SPOKE ABOUT THREATENED BOYCOTT BY U.S. LONGSHOREMEN AND THE CONCERN IT HAS CAUSED IN ECUADOR. WELL INFORMED ON RECENT MOVES AND CONVERSATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT, HE BELIEVED THAT THE SITUATION WAS PRESENTLY UNDER CONTROL.

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4. ON THE GREEN AMENDMENT HEARINGS, CARDENAS SAID HE HAD BEEN IN CONSULTATION WITH THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR

TO WASHINGTON WHO FELT THERE WAS 60-40 CHANCE OF PASSAGE. CARDENAS HIMSELF WAS NOT SO OPTIMISTIC.

5. THE LST ISSUE, CARDENAS SAID, WAS PARTICULARLY TROUBLESOME. AS WE KNEW, GOE NAVAL COMMISSION HAD BEEN IN WASHINGTON AT TIME OF OUR DECISION TO DELAY DELIVERY. RADM POVEDA, CNO ECUADOREAN NAVY, HAD BEEN PLANNING TO GO TO WASHINGTON TO TALK TO THE USNAVY. CARDENAS HAD CONVEYED DECISION ON LIST TO PRESIDENT AND FONMIN, WHO HAD RECEIVED IT "VERY BITTERLY". HE SAID THAT HIS PERSONAL ADVICE TO THE FONMIN ON THE ENTIRE ISSUE OF MILITARY SUPPLIES WAS FOR THE GOE TO PUT THE MATTER TO THE U.S. COLDLY AND PLAINLY, ONCE AND FOR ALL: DOES THE U.S. WISH TO BE A SUPPLIER OF ECUADOR OR NOT? IF THE U.S. DID NOT WANT TO BE ECUADOR'S PRINCIPAL MILITARY SUPPLIER, THEN ECUADOR WOULD LOOK TO OTHER SOURCES AND OTHER TECHNOLOGIES. "YOU ARE DRIVING US INTO DIRECTIONS WE DO NOT WISH TO GO", HE SAID, AND, IN THIS SENSE, CARDENAS ADDED, THERE IS SOME TRUTH TO THE SAYING "YOU ARE WHAT YOUR ENEMY WANTS YOU TO BE". CARDENAS ADDED THAT IT WOULD BE "SOMEWHAT INCONVENIENT" FOR ECUADOR TO RELY ON OTHER SOURCES OF MILITARY SUPPLY AND OTHER TECHNOLOGIES BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, WE ARE IN THE SAME HEMISPHERE.

6. ON ANOTHER MATTER, CARDENAS SAID HE HAD HEARD THAT VAN CAMP HAD ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO BUY TUNA WHICH HAD BEEN CONFISCATED FROM U.S. TUNA BOATS DURING THIS WINTER'S CRISIS. HE HAD FURTHER BEEN TOLD THAT THIS BOYCOTT WAS BEING CONDUCTED UNDER INSTRUCTION FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT. HE THOUGHT THIS WAS UNFORTUNATE JUST AT A TIME WHEN U.S. WAS TRYING TO PROMOTE A REGIONAL FISHERIES ACCORD. I EXPRESSED STRONG SKEPTICISM THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS BEHIND ANY SUCH BOYCOTT, ALTHOUGH I PROMISED TO LOOK INTO IT.

7. CARDENAS COMMENTED ALSO ON GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD ECUADOR AS EXPRESSED IN U.S. PRESS. HE FELT NEW YORK TIMES HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY ROUGH ON ECUADOR, INCLUDING SUCH PROMINENT COLUMNISTS AS JAMES RESTON. HE FELT THAT
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ON BALANCE THE WASHINGTON POST HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT MORE OBJECTIVE.

8. CARDENAS SAID THAT WHAT TRULY TROUBLED HIM WAS THAT THESE NEGATIVE ELEMENTS IN OUR RELATIONS EXISTED AT THE VERY TIME THAT PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ WAS SERIOUSLY DISPOSED TOWARD SETTLING THE PETROLEUM QUESTION. HE SAID THE GOE WANTED TO SOLVE BOTH THE PROBLEM OF PRICE AND OF ENCOURAGING FURTHER INVESTMENT FOR EXPLORATION, AND THAT PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ WAS PERSONALLY WORKING ON JUST THAT.

HE SAID HE THEREFORE FELT IT ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE OVERWHELMING INFLUENCE HELD BY SMALL GROUP OF INFLUENTIAL FISHING INTERESTS ON THE U.S. WEST COAST BE PUT INTO ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE AS REGARDS FORMULATIONS OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD ECUADRO.

9. COMMENT: CARDENAS WAS WELL INFORMED AND HAD UNDERSTOOD HIS RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS. HIS MOOD THROUGHOUT STRUCK ME AS BEING ONE OF MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER. ONE CONSEQUENCE OF CARDENAS' CONSULTATION WITH HIS GOVERNMENT IS THAT I SOON WILL BE SEPARATELY SEEING, AT THEIR INITIATIVE, BOTH SECRETARY GENERAL OF ADMINISTRATION AGUIRRE AND RADM POVEDA. THEY WILL NO DOUBT PURSUE SOME OR ALL OF THE ABOVE SUBJECTS FURTHER IN AN EFFORT TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER U.S. POLICY HAS FURTHER CHANGED TOWARD ECUADOR.
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